

Amendments to the Specification

The followings amendments to the specification were made under Article 34 during the International Preliminary Examination of the subject PCT application.

On page 6 of the English-language translation of the specification, please insert the following new paragraphs before the section header "Disclosure of the Invention" (see line 20 on page 6):

Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 09-204518 discloses a method for calculating the accumulated average of 4 neighboring pixels (up/down/right/left), or the accumulated average of 8 neighboring pixels including diagonal pixels, of the target point in the same image with respect to parallel slice data. Also disclosed is a method for calculating the accumulated average of 6 neighboring pixels of a solid body in which 4 neighboring pixels in the same image and the pixels of the same positions in the adjacent image are added, or the accumulated average of 26 neighboring pixels of a solid body in which 8 neighboring pixels in the same image and 3x3 pixels in the adjacent image are added.

However, the method of this document is related to the slice data correction processing, and there is no teaching in this document of calculating the integrated value of consecutive voxels in a 3-dimensional CT data without changing the 3-dimensional CT data for the correction as in the present invention.

Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 2002-374418 discloses a method for performing the processing corresponding to the pixel value, and performing the noise reduction processing and the sharp image processing by a single processing system.

However, the method of this document is related to the smoothing processing in which the low frequency components and the high frequency components are taken into account, and there is no teaching in this document of calculating the integrated value of consecutive voxels in a 3-dimensional CT data without changing the 3-dimensional CT data for the correction as in the present invention.

On page 20 of the English-language translation of the specification, please insert the following new paragraph after the first complete paragraph (before number (4) at line 8 on page 20). Please note that the underlined text in the below paragraph is being added for the first time in the present Preliminary Amendment in order to correct an obvious clerical error.

In this case, the currently observed 3-dimensional CT data element is set as a starting point, and an integrated value of a predetermined number of consecutive 3-dimensional CT data elements is calculated for each of a plurality of directions with the currently observed 3-dimensional CT data element being set as the starting point. And a sum of a predetermined number of upper-rank integrated values among respective integrated values calculated for the plurality of directions is calculated.

On page 21 of the English-language translation of the specification, please insert the following new paragraph after the third complete paragraph (at line 19 on page 21):

In this case, a sum of a predetermined number of upper-rank integrated values among respective integrated values calculated for the plurality of directions and a sum of a predetermined number of low-rank integrated values among the respective

integrated values calculated for the plurality of directions are calculated. The currently observed 3-dimensional CT data element is corrected based on the sum of the predetermined number of upper-rank integrated values and the sum of the predetermined number of low-rank integrated values. The corrected 3-dimensional CT data element is compared with the predetermined threshold value, and it is determined based on a result of the comparison whether the currently observed 3-dimensional CT data element is the data of a processing target.